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PGOV
SUBJECT: FRANCE SUPPORTS OAS LANGUAGE TO KEEP PRESSURE ON
FARC AND ENDING DRUG TRADE, SUBTLE DIFFERENCES ON VENEZUELA
REF: SECSTATE 77205

Classified By: Pol Minister Counselor Kathleen Allegrone for reasons 1.
4 (B & D).

¶1. (C) On July 18, Poloff delivered the reftel demarche to French MFA Colombia and Venezuela desk officer Lionel Paradisi. While the GOF was in agreement with the USG regarding efforts to free the remaining hostages, end the guerilla movement of the FARC, and close the drug trade, GOF views do not exactly track with the USG on Venezuela.

¶2. (C) The GOF and EU are in lock-step on the OAS language regarding the FARC (reftel), said Paradisi, and the GOF firmly concurs with the demarche's language about ending the drug trade, which they see as a truly international dilemma.

¶3. (C) Paradisi said the GOF believes a policy of "moderation and prudence" will prove more fruitful in persuading President Chavez to become more democratic and more cooperative in Venezuela. He acknowledged France was also concerned about good Franco-Venezuelan relations that have existed since the 1970s. The GOF believes that Chavez's public distancing from the FARC in June of this year could be attributed to the success of the GOF and EU policy of dialogue.

¶4. (C) Poloff raised a July 18 Associated Press report quoting President Uribe rejected continued Swiss or French roles in securing the release of the remaining national hostages. Paradisi said that while there are no more international hostages in Colombia, the continual hostage and drug-trafficking problems negatively affect stability in the region and beyond. He added if the GOF and other governments can promote dialogue among the governments in the Andes (as Uribe and Chavez did on July 11) then "only positive developments can occur." Paradisi summed up by noting that these efforts really come down to the effectiveness of the international community and the GOF to help free the remaining hostages.

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